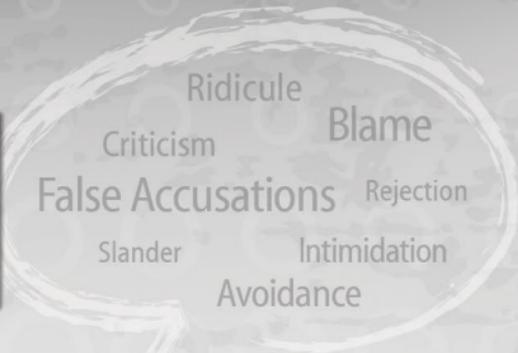


WHEN



Ridicule
Criticism
Blame
False Accusations
Rejection
Slander
Intimidation
Avoidance

OTHERS MAKE

YOUR LIFE

DIFFICULT

Daniel E. Miller

**WHEN
OTHERS MAKE
YOUR LIFE
DIFFICULT**



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Introduction

We share this earth with fellow humans. Together we drive the streets, walk the trails, and breathe the air. Sometimes this co-existence is peaceful and pleasant. Other times it is not. Close interaction breeds friction. Selfish individuals find their desires in conflict with the desires of others. Unhappy people seem determined to spread their gloom. In ways both large and small, people make life difficult for one another. Indeed, all of us have experienced the trauma of troubled relationships.

We begin this study by thinking about God. It is impossible to properly understand ourselves and others unless we understand the One who created us. As we understand Him and His purpose for us, we can more honestly evaluate our lives. Why do we relate to others the way we do? Why do we

cultivate relationships at all? In our relationships, what kinds of behaviors do we find offensive? All of these questions can be answered as we look honestly inward.

Moving beyond ourselves, we must consider the needs and desires of others. When we are affected by their negative behaviors, we can choose to focus on their wrong actions, or we can go deeper, trying to understand the motives, longings, and needs that are driving the behavior.

Sometimes human relationships seem hopeless. Fractures that have persisted for years seem beyond healing. Sarcastic responses, shouting matches, ridicule, and intimidation become habitual. In such relationships, beginning to relate in love seems awkward and humiliating. Our attempts to heal relationships may be rebuffed, making future efforts seem impossible.

However, there *is* hope. The God who “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20) is a God who wants to heal broken relationships. His purpose for us is to learn His way of love, relying on His strength to live in peace and freedom, even when others make life difficult.



1

Understanding God

*God that made the world and all things therein,
seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwel-
leth not in temples made with hands.*

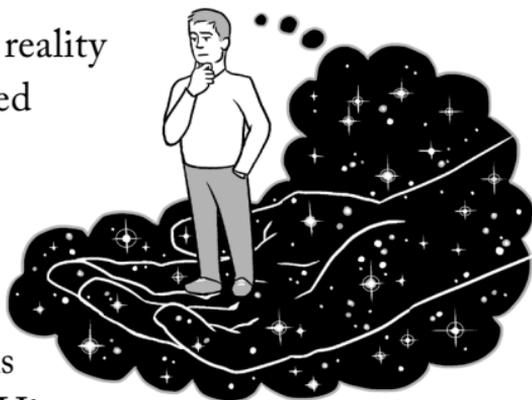
—Acts 17:24

As a student in high school and college, I remember periodic feelings of mental exhaustion. After trying so hard to grasp the complexities of algebra or the rules of economics, I suddenly came to a place where I felt I couldn't absorb the material. At times it seemed that, in spite of my efforts, my mind just didn't have the capacity to wrap itself around the concepts being taught.

Sometimes we have similar feelings when we think about God. Trying to comprehend the One who has always existed and who will always exist, who created everything and needs nothing, can

be challenging for the human mind. As created beings, we can never fully understand the mind of the infallible Being who created us, saved us, and sustains us.

However, this reality must be balanced with the truth that we can know God. In fact, His desire for relationship with us is what motivated Him



to create us (Acts 17:26–27; Revelation 4:11). Just as in human relationships a person changes from a stranger to an acquaintance to an intimate friend, so our relationship with God is designed to progress to ever deeper levels of intimacy and understanding. The good news is that we will never reach a place where we know God as deeply as He can be known; no matter how long we live or how long we have known the Lord, there is always more to learn about Him.

Learning to know God involves understanding the many aspects of His character and how they blend into one perfect whole. Emphasis on His mercy for mankind must be balanced with the